



Suicide Awareness and Intervention



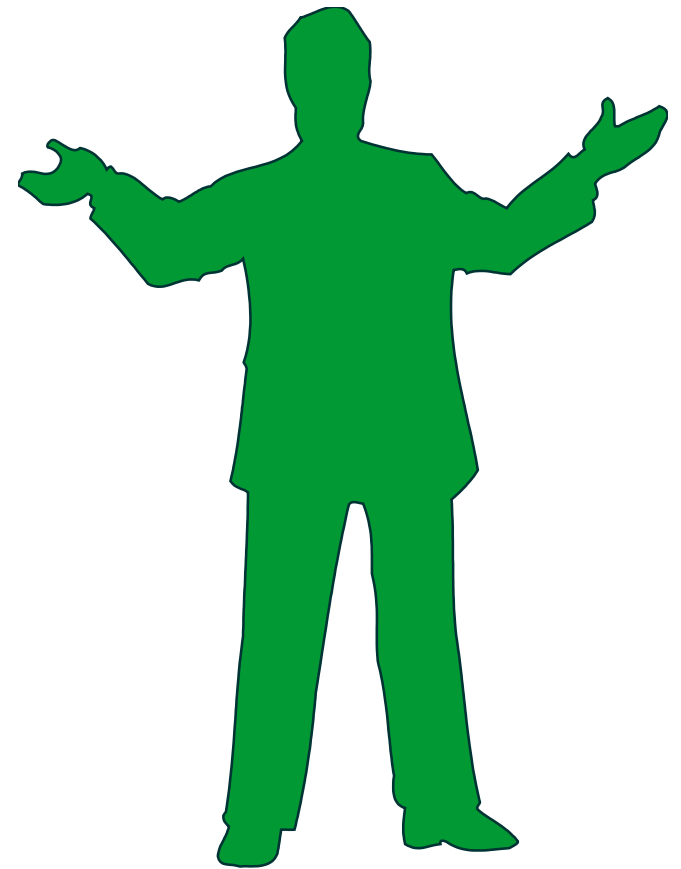
The Sobering Statistics

- **8th leading cause of death in the United States**
- **One suicide every 17 minutes**



Why Don't We Help A Troubled Person?

- **Inconvenience?**
- **Lack of Knowledge?**
- **Fear or Doubt?**
- **Cynicism?**





Purpose

- **Understand characteristics of the suicidal person**
- **Be alert to warning signs**
- **Know risk factors**
- **Know procedures to intervene and get help**





Characteristics Of The Suicidal Person

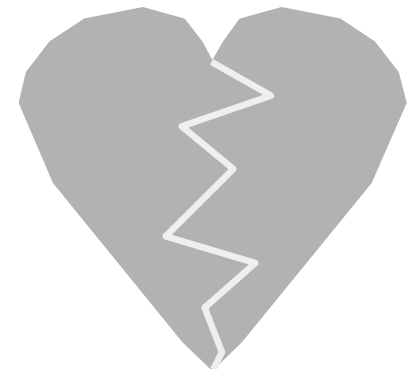
- **Ambivalent**
- **Overwhelmed by multiple stressors**
- **Hopeless**
- **Helpless**
- **Hapless**





Causes of Suicide

- **Loss of loved ones**
- **Loss of close relationship**
- **Loss of financial freedom**
- **Loss of social acceptance**
- **Loss of self-control**
- **Loss of job and/or career**
- **Loss of health**





Feelings Associated With Loss

- Helplessness
- Hopelessness
- Isolation
- Depression
- Worthlessness
- Despair
- Shame





Risk Factors

- Gender, age and race
- History of depression / multiple stressors
- History of prior attempts
- History of depression / suicide in close relatives
- Living alone
- Absence of support system or social withdrawal
- Drug / alcohol abuse / misuse





Possible Risk Factors

- **17-24 years old**
- **Relationship problems**
- **Own / Use personal firearm**
- **Alcohol involved**
- **Occur in first year at new duty station**





Warning Signs

- **Tragic situation occurs**
- **Depressive symptoms**
- **Verbal warnings**

– "I can't take this anymore!"

– "I wish I could just go to sleep and not wake up!"

- **Behavioral warnings**





Depressive Symptoms

- **Sleep disturbance**
- **Loss of interest in usual activities**
- **Excessive guilt / shame**
- **Loss of energy**
- **Diminished ability to concentrate**
- **Appetite change**
- **Mental / physical agitation or slowing**
- **Overwhelmed, hopeless, possibly suicidal**





Questions To Ask

■ Ask!

- "Have you had thoughts of harming yourself or others?"
- "How recently have you had these thoughts?"
- "What have you thought of doing to harm yourself?"

■ You cannot plant the thoughts of committing suicide in someone!





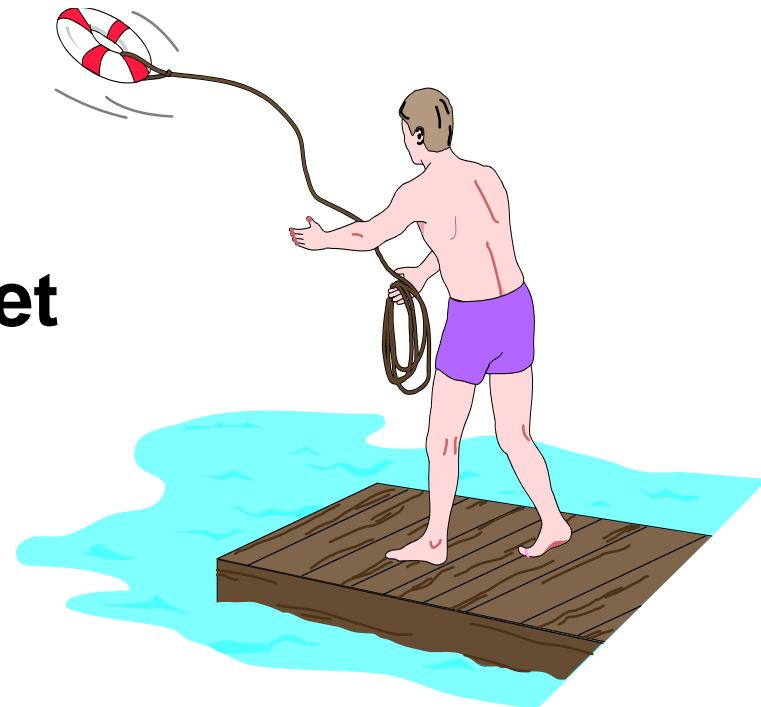
Find Out

- Does the person have a plan?
 - P - What is the Proximity to help?
 - A - What is the Availability of means?
 - L - What is the Lethality of means?
 - S - What is the Specificity of plan?



What To Do

- **Take threats seriously**
- **Act confidently / take charge**
- **Be directive**
- **Accompany the person to get help**
- **Give encouragement!!!**





What Not To Do

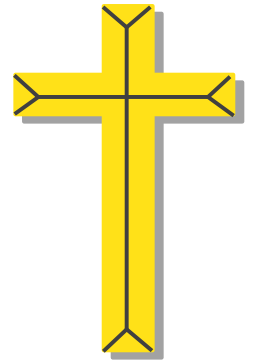
- **Don't act shocked**
- **Don't debate**
- **Don't tell them the effect their death will have**
- **Don't ever to try to physically remove the weapon**



Important Numbers

■ On base

- Chaplain 596-2127
- Mental Health 596-0522



■ On base (after hours)

- Emergency Medical Services 596-2157
- PMO 596-6141
- Staff Duty Officer 596-6126

